

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1-22. (Cancelled without Prejudice).

23. (New) A storage network for accessing stored data in a plurality of storage devices and storing data in said plurality of storage devices comprising:

 a first host device;

 a first host-side link that is connected to said first host device and not any other host devices, said first host-side link including a first host-side interface that sends and receives data to and from said first host device;

 a plurality of first storage-side links connected directly to said plurality of storage devices without going through a router, said plurality of first storage-side links including a plurality of first storage-side interfaces that send and receive data directly to and from said plurality of storage devices without going through a router;

 a first switch matrix that is connected to said first host-side link and not any other host-side links, and to said plurality of first storage-side links that is operative to establish communication channels between said first host-side link and any of said plurality of first storage-side links, but not establishing any communication channels between any of said plurality of first storage-side links;

 a second host device;

 a second host-side link that is connected to said second host device and not said first host device, said second host-side link including a second host-side interface that sends and receives data to and from said first host device;

 a plurality of second storage side links connected directly to said plurality of storage devices without going through a router, said plurality of second storage-side links including a plurality of second storage-side interfaces that send and receive data directly to and from said plurality of storage devices without going through a router;

a second switch matrix that is connected to said second host-side link and to said plurality of second storage-side links that is operative to establish communication channels between said second host-side link and any of said plurality of second storage-side links, but not establishing any communication channels between any of said plurality of storage-side links.

24. (New) A method of communicating data between two host devices and a plurality of storage devices comprising the process of:

- sending a first data access request from a first host device through a first host-side link to a first switch matrix, said first host-side link including a first host-side interface that sends and receives data to and from said first host-side device and not any other host-side devices;
- providing a plurality of first storage-side links connected directly to said plurality of storage devices without going through a router, said plurality of first storage-side links including a plurality of first storage-side interfaces that send and receive data directly to and from said plurality of storage devices without going through a router;
- establishing first data transfer paths between said first host device and said plurality of storage devices using a first switch matrix that is connected to said first host-side link and to said plurality of first storage-side links to create communication channels between said first host device and said plurality of storage devices without creating any communication channels between said plurality of storage devices;
- sending a second data access request from a second host device through a second host-side link to a second switch matrix, said second host-side link including a second host-side interface that sends and receives data to and from said second host-side device and is not connected to said first host-side device;
- providing a plurality of second storage-side links connected directly to said plurality of storage devices without going through a router, said plurality of second storage-side links including a plurality of second storage-side interfaces

that send and receive data directly to and from said plurality of storage devices without going through a router;

establishing second data transfer paths between said second host device and said plurality of storage devices using a second switch matrix that is connected to said second host-side link and to said plurality of second storage-side links to create communication channels between said second host device and said plurality of storage devices without creating any communication channels between said plurality of storage devices.